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**2025 Michelle Smith
Lecture Series**



2025 Michelle Smith Lecture Series

This year's Michelle Smith Lecture Series will include three presentations, delivered by a cadre of outstanding authors, over a period of three months. Participation is by subscription. Seating is limited and the series usually sells out quickly--so please respond soon to reserve your space.

This series is supported by an endowment established by a generous grant from the late Robert H. and Clarice Smith.

Assisted listening devices and other accommodations are available upon request in the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Auditorium. Please contact us in advance of making your reservation.

Location

All lectures will take place at the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Auditorium located in the Mount Vernon Inn complex. Receptions and book-signings will take place in the same facility immediately following each lecture. The most convenient parking is in the public lot west of the George Washington Parkway.

Fees

3-Lecture Series:

In-person: \$150 for members, \$185 for non-members

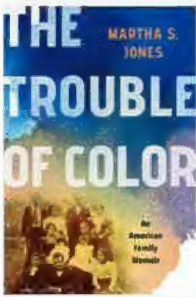
Virtual: \$45 for members, \$55 for non-members

This is a ticketless event and your name will be on a reservation list at the door.

For further information, please call 703.799.8686 or visit us at mountvernon.org/michellesmith.

Dinner at the Mount Vernon Inn

Those who wish to have dinner before or after the presentations should contact the Mount Vernon Inn Restaurant at 703.799.5296.



The Trouble of Color: An American Family Memoir

By Martha S. Jones

**Thursday, March 13, 2025,
7:00 p.m.**

Martha S. Jones grew up feeling her Black identity was obvious to all who saw her. But weeks into college, a Black Studies classmate challenged Jones's right to speak. Suspicious of the color of her skin and the texture of her hair, he confronted her with a question that inspired a lifetime of introspection: "Who do you think you are?"

Now a prize-winning scholar of Black history, Jones delves into her family's past for answers. In every generation since her great-great-great-grandmother survived enslavement to raise a free family, color determined her ancestors' lives. But the color line was shifting and jagged, not fixed and straight. Some backed away from it, others skipped along it, and others still were cut deep by its sharp teeth.

Journeying across centuries, from rural Kentucky and small-town North Carolina to New York City and its suburbs, *The Trouble of Color* is a lyrical, deeply felt meditation on the most fundamental matters of identity, belonging, and family.

Martha S. Jones is the Society of Black Alumni Presidential Professor, professor of history, and a professor at the SNF Agora Institute at the Johns Hopkins University. A prizewinning author and editor of four books, most recently *Vanguard*, she is past copresident of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians and has contributed to the *New York Times*, *Atlantic*, and many other publications.

RICK ATKINSON

THE FATE OF
THE DAY



**The Fate of the Day:
The War for America,
Fort Ticonderoga to
Charleston, 1777-1780**

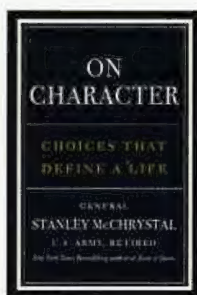
By Rick Atkinson

**Tuesday, April 29, 2025,
7:00 p.m.**

Prize-winning historian Rick Atkinson provides a riveting narrative covering the middle years of the Revolution. Stationed in Paris, Benjamin Franklin woos the French; in Pennsylvania, George Washington pleads with Congress to deliver the money, men, and materiel he needs to continue the fight. In New York, General William Howe, the commander of the greatest army the British have ever sent overseas, plans a new campaign against the Americans—even as he is no longer certain that he can win this searing, bloody war. The months and years that follow bring epic battles at Brandywine, Saratoga, Monmouth, and Charleston, a winter of misery at Valley Forge, and yet more appeals for sacrifice by every American committed to the struggle for freedom.

Timed to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the beginning of the Revolution, Atkinson's brilliant account of the lethal conflict between the Americans and the British offers not only deeply researched and spectacularly dramatic history, but also a new perspective on the demands that a democracy makes on its citizens.

Rick Atkinson is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of seven previous works of history, including *The Long Gray Line*, the *Liberation Trilogy* (*An Army at Dawn*, *The Day of Battle*, and *The Guns at Last Light*), and *The British Are Coming*, the first volume of the *Revolution Trilogy*. His numerous awards include Pulitzer Prizes for history and journalism.



On Character: Choices That Define a Life

*By General
Stanley McChrystal*

**Thursday, May 29, 2025,
7:00 p.m.**

How to measure a life? After a career of service, retired four-star general Stanley McChrystal had much to contemplate. He pondered his successes and failures, his beliefs and aspirations, and asked himself, who am I, really? And more importantly, who have I become? When I die, how will I be measured?

In the end, McChrystal came to a conclusion as simple as it was profound: the reality of who we are cannot be recorded in dates or accomplishments. It is found in our character—the most accurate and last full measure of who we choose to be.

On Character offers McChrystal's blueprint for living with purpose and integrity, challenging us to examine not just our deeds but who we become through them. Drawing from a lifetime of experience, he distills profound insights on setting and meeting standards, aligning actions with beliefs, and offers practical advice on overcoming obstacles and pursuing self-improvement.

In an era where understanding and upholding our ideals is more crucial than ever, *On Character* offers an inspiring roadmap for personal growth and integrity—a call to become our best selves, both as individuals and as Americans.

Stanley McChrystal is a retired United States Army general best known for his command of Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) from 2003 to 2008 during which his organization was credited with the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

The Hour of Victory
Edward Percy Moran, c. 1914.

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel H. Sheppard, 2006



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